

# Land Values Jump; Tax Bills to Follow

By JERRY REYNOLDS  
Press-Herald City Editor

An increase of nearly 25 per cent — the largest in the city's history — in the assessed valuation of Torrance was announced Monday by County Assessor Philip E. Watson.

Watson, in a report on the county's assessed valuation, said the value of land, personal property, and improvements in the city jumped from \$297 million in 1967 to \$366,187,370, exclusive of public utilities.

Addition of approximately \$21 million in public utilities

would bring the city's worth to more than \$387 million.

The increase is nearly twice that estimated by Watson's office in May when, under state law, he had to provide school districts with estimates for budget planning.

Both the city and the Torrance school budgets have been based on assessed valuation of about \$340 million, the Press-Herald was told.

First question asked by local officials of Assessor Watson has been, "Are you sure?"

Jerome I. Scharfman, as-

stant city manager, told the Press-Herald yesterday the city has been making every effort to double check the figures. "We want to make sure there was no mistake made," Scharfman said.

And if the figure is correct — Scharfman said there is no reason now to believe otherwise — then the city can expect about \$500,000 in additional revenues provided the tax rate — \$1,2380 per \$100 assessed valuation — is not changed.

School officials, who note that the increased value of local real estate will result

in a somewhat lower apportionment in state funds, estimate that a net gain of some \$800,000 in revenue will be realized.

Dr. Frank Mattox, assistant superintendent of schools for business, said yesterday he has asked Assessor Watson to "double check" the figures. Mattox said the increase is more than twice that of any previous year and because it is "so abnormal we want to protect ourselves."

Assessed valuation of the school district is pegged at \$365,656,510 or about \$500,000 less than the valuation

of the city, Watson reported. The reason is that boundaries of the school district have not been adjusted to include some sections adjoining Lomita which were annexed by the city in recent years.

The sections are largely unpopulated and there has been no pressing need to incorporate the areas into the school district it was reported.

Assessed valuation of the El Camino Junior College District was put at \$1.118 billion. The district includes all of Torrance, the beach cities,

and the Centinela Valley cities north to Inglewood.

Watson, in announcing the assessed valuation Monday, noted that business personal property showed an unexpected 15.7 per cent increase in value. He said the increases will result in "a windfall for many taxing districts."

"If they take advantage of it to squeeze every available penny from the property owners, they can expect a renewed deluge of protests and taxpayer revolts" when bills go out in November, Watson added.

He said he hopes residents

will not be deceived "when the taxing districts start playing the tax rate game." He noted that budgets are up throughout the county and warned that people "are going to be paying higher taxes unless budgets are reduced."

Mayor Albert Isen already has called for a 10-cent reduction in the city tax rate. Isen said the 10-cent cut would mean the city will "still have \$170,000 more than we had yesterday."

Councilman Ken Miller opened discussion of possible tax cuts at the Tuesday eve-

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Torrance

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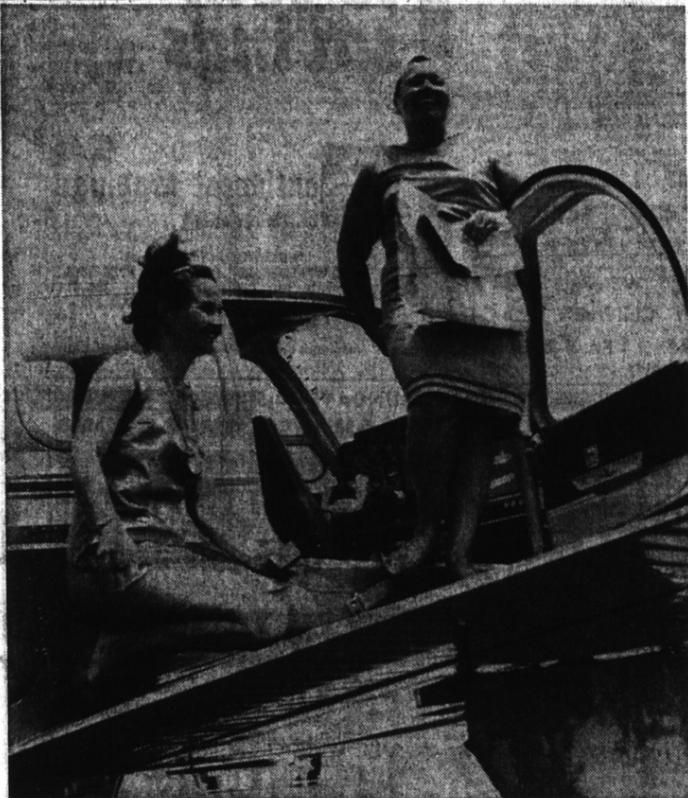
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**FIRST TO ARRIVE . . .** Pilot Pat McElven of Wichita, Kan., steps out of her Beechcraft Bonanza S35 airplane to join co-pilot Marilyn Copeland on the wing as the pair arrived yesterday afternoon at the Torrance Municipal Airport. The ladies were the first to arrive here in the annual Powder Puff Derby, which began Monday morning in Atlantic City, N.J., after a 48-hour delay because of bad weather. (Press-Herald Photo)

# Bad Weather Plagues All-Woman Air Event

## Kansans First To Arrive Here

Four pilots landed their planes at the Torrance Municipal Airport Tuesday afternoon as the 1967 Powder Puff Derby appeared headed toward conclusion.

The all-woman air race, scheduled to begin last Saturday, was delayed 48 hours by bad weather which has forced 12 entries out of the event and continues to plague pilots.

Twenty-one planes were reported grounded at Martinsburg, W.Va., early today, although clearing weather was reported. Another three planes were due to leave Cincinnati, Ohio, Airport, while six more were in Carbondale, Ill.

Mrs. Judy Wagner, flying alone in a Beechcraft Bonanza, held the unofficial lead early today. Mrs. Wagner was due to leave Albuquerque, N.M., for the flight to Torrance.

POWDER Puff officials told the Press-Herald that 10 planes were in Amarillo, Tex., 15 in Albuquerque, and 2 in Flagstaff, Ariz. They were expected to arrive at the Torrance airport this afternoon.

Pilots will have until 5 p.m. tomorrow to complete the transcontinental course, it was reported.

Winners of the race will be announced following a debriefing session Friday morning and awards are scheduled to be presented Friday evening.



ROBERT L. SPRAGUE  
Campaign Aide

## Executive To Direct Area Drive

A prominent oil refinery executive, Robert L. Sprague, has assumed "extra volunteer duties" as vice chairman for the fall fund appeal for the United Crusade in the Harbor area.

The Shell Oil Co. treasury manager will assist in direction of the most extensive campaign ever conducted in the Harbor area. This includes San Pedro, Wilmington, Lomita, Harbor City, Torrance, Gardena, Palos Verdes, and Rolling Hills.

"Our Harbor communities should be able to handle

## Lion Killed in Attack on Owner

A 250-pound lion being trained to work with a 390-pound topless dancer was shot and killed Monday morning by police after the animal attacked its owner.

The lion, called Charley, attacked owner Jack Traub about 5 a.m. Monday after Gardena police called Traub to report the lion had escaped from its cage.

Traub said police told him someone had cut open the cage, located at the rear of a bar at 18908 Normandie Ave. He said he went to the bar, located Charley, and ordered him to return to his cage.

The lion jumped at Traub and knocked him to the ground. Traub said he held Charley off with both hands and managed to turn over to protect his neck. Police shot the lion when he bit Traub in the back.

Officers said the first shot knocked the lion off Traub, but it took 10 shots to kill the animal, Traub, who said he was training the lion to work with a dancer employed at the club, was taken to Harbor General Hospital where

## Probe of Area Fire Under Way

Preliminary hearing for a former fireman charged with arson was continued until July 18 on a request by the district attorney Friday for more time to complete investigation and laboratory tests in the case.

Gardena resident Thomas Fairbanks was charged with arson of a Torrance home July 3 after he allegedly threw gasoline in the home and ignited the furnishings.

The case will be heard by Judge George R. Perkovich in South Bay Municipal Court Division 2.

## MADRONA STREET

# City Delays Vote On Highway Route

By TIM O'DONNELL  
Press-Herald Staff Writer

Action on the proposed extension of Madrona Avenue from Sepulveda Boulevard southward through Torrance Heights, across Lomita Boulevard, west of the airport, and down Madison Street to Hawthorne Boulevard south of WALTERIA was deferred by the City Council Tuesday night in the face of stiff opposition from residents along the route.

The matter was referred to the Council's Public Works Committee for study and a recommendation.

The proposed route and its effects on surrounding homes hangs on several delicate threads, among which are the acquisition of railroad tracks and the possibility of a future Hawthorne freeway.

IF THE CITY cannot secure removal of railroad tracks that cross the proposed street route, they would have to acquire anywhere from 17 to 25 homes. Seven homes would have to be acquired in any event.

Concern was voiced by homeowners in attendance concerning effects of such an extension of Madrona on Sam Levy Elementary School,

which would wind up on the very edge of the new street.

THE TORRANCE School Board was aware of the proposed street extension prior to construction of the school, and provided a 40-foot front with which the city could work with if such a street were to materialize, according to City Engineer Walter Nollac.

Actual construction of the road was projected as far in the future as 15 years, and the resolution before the council called only for selection of rights-of-way, primarily to prevent industry and commercial interests from building on the proposed route.

IN OPPOSING that motion councilman George Vico said, "Prevent people from building on the property they live and pay taxes on? I will never go for that."

Mayor Albert Isen suggested that a citizens' committee be formed to negotiate compromises with the planning people, and arrive at a workable agreement.

When the president of such a committee told the mayor that had been done through the mail, Isen suggested that he "try, try again."

An alternate route was handled in that same discussion that proposed the extension of Maple Avenue to Early Avenue, which presently bisects Lomita Boulevard.

## Harbor City Sailor Dies On Freeway

A Harbor City sailor was killed early Sunday when he apparently lost control of his car on the Harbor Freeway at 149th Street.

Thomas W. Byron, 24, of 25525 Doble Ave., was pronounced dead at the scene of the 2:20 a.m. crash. Los Angeles police said Byron ran through the center divider after he lost control of his vehicle.

He was driving south on the freeway at the time of the crash, it was reported.

# Hopes Dim for Pueblo Playground

By ED FREUDENBURG  
Press-Herald Staff Writer

A decision to let the city construct a three acre park in the Pueblo area on American-Standard property now rests with the main office of the company, according to Jack Day, plant manager.

However, he commented that at this time, the project is not possible as far as he is concerned.

Day reported that he was forwarding the city's request for a nominal lease of the land along Del Amo Boulevard to the real estate office in New York for study.

ALTHOUGH Day said that he has never said the land would be offered, he sent the information for study after Harry Van Bellehem, director of recreation for the city, approached him on the matter.

But, Day said, he did not

feel that the park, consisting of a graded field and fenced area, could be built for under \$5,000 by the city.

However, the Parks Commission, Van Bellehem related, still stands by its proposal of about \$5,000 for improvement.

COMMENTING on the proposal, Day said he will "let the wheels of progress roll," but that in his organization, it would probably take two to three years.

The city recently turned down a proposal for a park on Southern Pacific Railway property east of American-Standard because of the cost involved, said Van Bellehem. He said the railroad wanted \$13,800 for about 2 acres per year.

"They were dealing with the city as a commercial interest," Van Bellehem commented.

As far as the city is concerned, he said, the price would be too high for land which may have proven to be too small.

The city would like to obtain the American-Standard property on a \$1 a year arrangement, the recreation director indicated.

In the past, plant manager Day related, there have been several instances where property of the plant and employees have been stolen or destroyed. He indicated that some of the damage has come from the immediate area around the plant, the same area which would be served by the park.

HE SAID he feels that a park, "won't cure the problem because kids that steal don't play baseball."

"The good neighbor policy goes both ways," Day stated. "They come over here and

steal through the fence and then turn around and ask us for land."

Torrance juvenile officer Joseph Capriotti disagreed with Day by stating that the building of a park would "help the area completely."

"Boys are just hanging around on that street," the officer said.

"If they (American-Standard) donated land, there is no reason that they should be hostile," the Pueblo officer related.

CAPRIOTTI said that he has not noticed any great problem with damage to American-Standard during recent months and that the area has improved its relations with the police department.

He said he felt that if the kids are kept busy, there

## Incorporation Bid Opens - - -

A delegation of 25 Dominguez-Carson Citizens Monday formally filed a notice of intention to circulate an incorporation petition. The move, coming in the wake of a controversial hearing before the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFC) which stripped the proposed city of several areas adjacent to Long Beach, could pave the way for an election on the cityhood bid. John Junk, chairman of the Dominguez-Carson Citizens Committee for Incorporation, said the group would seek to incorporate the new city quickly, then move to annex those areas excluded by the LAFC decision.

## Charter Committee Named - - -

Names of 10 Torrance citizens who will serve as the city's Charter Review Committee were announced here Tuesday evening. Members of the committee, which will undertake a thorough review of the Torrance City Charter, include Mrs. Betty Barnes, Larry Bowman, Stanley Dunn, Leonard F. Kane, Jack Lament, C. S. Morrison, William Poser, Mrs. Louise Radcliffe, Vern Smith, and Dr. Stanley Yanase.

## Police Arrest Three - - -

Two men and a woman were booked by Torrance police early today on charges of burglary after police allegedly apprehended the men burglarizing a garage at 17203 Casimir Ave. and a home at 17204 Wilkie Ave. Carmen Fiorello, 21, of 17007 Cranbrook Ave., was taken into custody as he allegedly burglarized the garage while Antonio Zaragus, 19, of Culver City, was reported arrested in the home of Erick Bronish on Wilkie Avenue. The third suspect, Kathleen Zaragus, 20, of 17604 Kornblum Ave., was taken into custody near her auto as she allegedly waited for the two male suspects.